

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: If we're ready, our first speaker
2 is Keith Arnold. Welcome.

3 MR. ARNOLD: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon. I'm
4 the director of Outreach Sierra Treatment Center here in Tucson,
5 Arizona which specializes in the treating of compulsive gambling
6 as well as other addictions and disorders; drugs, alcohol, eating
7 disorder, depression. My purpose here today is to give you some
8 insight into the negative effects and consequences of gambling on
9 this small but important part of the population which is growing.

10 Out of the 431 patients that have sought treatment at
11 Sierra Tucson this year only three have come in with a primary
12 diagnosis of compulsive gambling. However, when we look at cross
13 addictions, about 18 percent of our patient population suffers
14 from some form of gambling abuse. Given the hundreds of calls we
15 receive on a dedicated 888 LAST BET line, and only treating three
16 patients is dismal, a dismal percentage.

17 One of the reasons for this is that insurance does
18 not reimburse for the treatment of compulsive gambling even
19 though compulsive gambling is recognized as a psychiatric
20 disorder referred to as an impulse control disorder under the
21 DMS4. Also by the time gamblers reach out to call, they've
22 pretty much lost everything. Estimates run from about 1.7
23 percent to 7.3 percent of the population, adult population, is
24 addicted to gambling. We should remember that also there are 10
25 to 15 other people adversely effected by this one person.

26 Problem gambling is a major public problem that is
27 beginning to receive attention as more states allow gambling, as
28 the Internet proliferates opportunities and as Las Vegas covertly

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com

1 attracts families who bear a future generation of compulsive
2 addicts. As Sierra Tucson we see two different types of
3 gamblers, the action gambler and the relief gambler.

4 The action gambler tends to be male, high functioning, skilled,
5 focused on power and money. These people tend to have a co-
6 existing condition; drugs, alcohol, sex.

7 The relief gambler is usually female, retired, video
8 poker player. This segment is the fastest growing and of most
9 concern as the elderly gamble away their social security and life
10 savings. For relief gamblers, it's not about money, it's about
11 depression.

12 If the government is going to continue to allow the
13 proliferation of casinos and various forms of betting, it has
14 responsibility to take care of this percent of the population
15 most severely effected by the disease and mandate insurance
16 coverage, federal and state programs and responsible gaming
17 programs. The potential danger of compulsive gambling is its
18 hidden disease. There are no physical symptoms associated with
19 the addiction until the late stages. There are no odors, no
20 stumbling, no slurring, just devastation resulting in forgery,
21 embezzlement, robbery, prostitution, incarceration and suicide.

22 The concern is not how many compulsive gamblers
23 Sierra Tucson treats in one year, but how many thousands out
24 there go untreated. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Thank you very much, Mr.
26 Arnold. I'd like to assure all of the -- all of you who will
27 testify in this public comment section that even though some of
28 the Commissioners are not present, that all of your testimony

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com

1 will be in the transcript and will be considered by all of the
2 Commissioners.

3 I understand that Governor Romero and Governor Lujan
4 are not present; is that correct?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com